

**VILLAGE OF GRAND BEACH  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
March 20, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council President Harry Walder called the regular council meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. EST. Present in addition to Walder were James Bracewell, Ed Brandes, Blake O'Halloran with Peter Doerr absent.

**ADOPT AGENDA**

Brandes moved, seconded by O'Halloran to adopt the regular agenda as presented, motion carried unanimously 4-0.

**ADOPT CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approve Village Council Minutes from February 21, 2024
- b. Pay Bills with written additions
- c. Approve hall rentals- June 2, 2024- Lisa Dodge

Brandes moved, seconded by O'Halloran to adopt the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS**

None

**PUBLIC HEARING**

None

**COMMISSION REPORTS**

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Harry reported that he met with Mr. Vanecko as scheduled to talk about the purchase of Village property next to Jensen Court, but has yet to hear back from him.

No updates yet on the lawsuit with New Buffalo township.

A newspaper article reported that the bike path work would begin this year from the State line all the way to New Buffalo but Marcy Hamilton from SWMPC said the portion from Michiana through Grand Beach is actually not slated to begin until next year. There are real concerns of the railroad crossing and road intersection that will entangle with the proposed bike path so Marcy is trying to get Amtrak to schedule a meeting with Grand Beach to address these concerns. Bracewell asked if the article stated a date for the groundbreaking in New Buffalo, it is April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The council discussed adding a stoplight at the intersection and Harry reported that Michelle Heit stated she would check with the township board about supporting GB in this effort. The council also agreed it would be a good idea to have a town hall meeting to make certain all GB residents have the opportunity to understand this issue as thoroughly as possible. The council had pictures of the bike crossings at RR tracks in Michigan City as an example of how this crossing can be accomplished safely.

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After consulting with the Village Attorney and Auditor, Walder stated a percentage of the monies collected from Short Term Rental fees can be used for other operating funds related to those costs.

Walder asked the council to consider changing the council meetings to the upstairs hall so the smaller meeting room they are currently in could be used for additional storage with newer closets, possibly used as a place to display the items organized by the historical society and used as a smaller conference/meeting room.

The beaches are making a comeback and it is a great sight to see. Harry got some quotes on stairs for several of the beaches to make access easier but they are not cheap. Stairs for Ely beach would cost approximately \$30,000, Pine \$20,000, Jensen Court, and Robin Lane each with a walkway and handicap accessible platform \$50,000 and \$60,000 respectively. Walder added he spoke with Maintenance Superintendent Bob Dabbs about the Royal Beach Access which has a decent size beach right now and if the Village added sand to this beach access to cover the existing revetment materials, this beach access could also be opened this summer.

Harry reminded the public the village office will be closed for training on the new BS&A accounting system next week, March 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> and then again from April 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>.

Molly Newell spoke on behalf of The Village Hall committee which recommended the council approve the landscaping plan before them for the upstairs back patio. This committee also recommended the Council approve proceeding with the painting of the Village Hall which is on the agenda. There was a brief discussion about furniture for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor patio at the Village Hall. Funds would be raised via donations for the furniture and a donation of one piece of furniture was being made by Diane Cody and Mike Elliot. Diane and Mike also offered a donation of \$1500 for landscaping if the Village makes a \$1500 match.

### **REPORT ON NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP MEETING**

Blake stated the township is now considering placing a moratorium on marihuana licenses since they have up to 45 so far.

### **BUILDING & ZONING**

Walder had nothing to report on building and zoning.

**PARK & RECREATION:** Doerr was not present so there was no report.

### **STREETS & WATER**

Bracewell said he looked over the proposal for Wightman and Associates and thought it was a bit like putting the cart before the horse, the council should figure out on how to fund fixing the roads first and then get proposals. Walder said that item is on the agenda for later in the meeting and we would address this subject at that point in the meeting.

### **POLICE**

Brandes had no report.

### **PRO SHOP & COURSE**

O'Halloran reported that Merritt Engineering has come up with a way to clean out the intake pipe in the lake that provides water to the golf course. They should be starting that project next month. Blake also wanted to clarify that in the minutes of last month he was not specifically stating he wanted to increase the number of tee times on the course. He meant he is looking to increase golfers via social media strategies to bring golfers in at the times we are not busy like Monday-Thursday and evenings after ladies' golf. He added they are purchasing new benches/ball washer/hole layout signs for each hole. These will be paid for by donations. The existing bench donors will get first right of refusal as well. With the new computer purchases approved for the Village office, one of those use computers will go to the Pro Shop.

### **SERVISCAPE REPORT**

Clay Putnam reported that the snowmobile signs and stakes have all been removed from the course and spring clean-up is in full swing and they are preparing for the new season.

### **PERSONNEL REPORTS**

**SUPERINTENDENT:** In addition to his written report, Superintendent Bob Dabbs reported his department is in the process of spring cleaning and making repairs to the Leaf unit so they should be out collecting the last of the leaves until May 1<sup>st</sup>. He also suggested the council consider replacing the seasonal speed bumps with speed humps which are smaller and quieter, especially with all of the truck/trailers that drive through the village. Walder asked him to get some prices to present to the council next month.

**POLICE CHIEF:** Chief Layman reported the check fraud case he has been working on has finally resulted in an arrest. Another check fraud case is currently under investigation. Once again, he cautioned the use of writing paper checks as criminals are stealing them and "washing" them, he urged the public to pay bills online as much as they can. Rental inspections are about halfway completed, just about the same rentals as last year, he hopes to finish up close to May 1<sup>st</sup>. Chief Layman reported Heather is still at the academy and almost halfway through. Walder asked where Chief is putting her when she graduates and he said she will be on Michiana's payroll.

**BUILDING INSPECTOR:** In addition to his written report, Building Inspector Chad Butler stated things were starting to pick up a bit with 17 homes still under construction. He has signed 2 Certificates of Occupancy with 2 more coming next week. There are 8 potential permits sitting on his desk waiting for completion of paperwork by their owners.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. FEMA Ordinance- Bracewell moved to approve the updated FEMA Ordinance 2006-01 to Address Updated Plain Management Maps, effective April 25, 2024; seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 4-0.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Hall Rental Rate Updates-Brandes moved to approve the recommended increase in Hall Rentals as follows:

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|------------------------|----------------|
| a. Resident <50 guests | \$250 to \$300 |
| b. Resident >50 guests | \$300 to \$400 |

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|----------------------------------|----------------|
| c. Non-Resident with a sponsor   | \$680 to \$800 |
| d. School/Charity stays the same | \$400          |
| e. Cleaning Deposit              | \$100 to \$250 |

motion was seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 4-0.

2. Council meeting time-O'Halloran moved to approve keeping the council meeting time year-round to 5pm EST; seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 4-0.
3. Bracewell moved to approve Clerk-Treasurer Kim Wolnik as an Authorized Signatory for Municipal Employees' Retirement System Contracts and Service Credit Purchase Approvals; seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 4-0.
4. Brandes moved to approve added Deputy-Clerk Kelly Boersma as a signer on Village bank accounts; seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 4-0.
5. Technology Proposals- With the proposals ahead for council approval, Walder informed the council that we are re-purposing the two computers that are being replaced in the Village office by giving them to the Pro Shop and Building and Zoning. Bracewell stated he was interested in seeing additional quotes for purchases such as these so the council has something additional to compare to, it is just good business. The Clerk Kim Wolnik stated she reached out to Adams Remco for the copier quote but they did not respond. O'Halloran added he realizes it is much easier to keep with your current technology advisor when they are hard to come by and ever-changing in their field.
  - a. Brandes moved to approve the purchase for email conversion/domain change from the Tech of Southwest Michigan for \$1280 to be paid out of account 390.010; seconded by Bracewell passed unanimously 4-0.
  - b. Brandes moved to approve the purchase for 2 new computers in the Village offices from the Tech of Southwest Michigan in the amount of \$2823.40 to be paid from account 390.010; seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 4-0.
  - c. Brandes moved to approve the purchase of a new copier from Parrett Company in the amount of \$4795.50 to be paid from account 390.010; seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 4-0.
  - d. Brandes moved to approve the website design submitted by Kelsey Miller for \$5,000; motion seconded by Bracewell and passed unanimously 4-0.
6. Village Roadways Survey/Evaluation Proposal Wightman and Associates- Bracewell stated he could not support this proposal at this time as he has not had the chance to review the documents fully that were presented to the Village President or meet with Wightman and Associates himself, as a Road Commissioner should do. He pointed out that in the new Master Plan it clearly states the Road Commissioner will be held responsible for any decisions made regarding the roads and he is not comfortable with that. Walder stated this survey would list all of the roads in Grand Beach in order of deterioration as well as provide optimal solutions for how to repair. Discussion was held regarding additional engineering bids as well, Walder asked Bracewell to contact Merritt Engineering and Abonmarche and get their proposals for the next meeting. O'Halloran asked if we were setting aside money each year for this road project. Walder stated the Major Street Fund had \$300,000 in it and

the Local Street Fund had \$100,000 in it. Bracewell stated we do put money aside each year in the Capital Fund, a little at a time, you have to do that in order to save up and it takes time which may not make everyone happy. Bracewell moved to table this item until the next meeting; seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 4-0.

7. Village Hall Painting bids- O'Halloran moved to approve the lowest bid for painting the exterior trim of the Village Hall to match the stairs in the amount of \$7600 from JK Handyman to be paid from account 390.050; seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 4-0.
8. Village Hall Landscape Donation-Harry thanked Diane Cody and Mike Elliot for their generous donation of \$1500 to be used for the upstairs patio landscaping project. Diane added she will look into where the tents are staked so as not to plant anything that would be in the way of that. She added the maintenance guys will be ripping out bushes and planting new replacements by May 1<sup>st</sup>. O'Halloran moved to approve the design and for the Village to pay the matching \$1500; seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously.
9. Police Department Equipment Sale-Chief Ryan Layman asked the council for permission to sell the 2018 Ford Explorer for \$8,000 to La Porte Chrysler. He asked that the funds be put in the Capital Projects fund to be used towards the purchase of a future vehicle. O'Halloran thought that vehicle should be worth so much more than that but Layman stated that banks will not finance fleet vehicles but dealerships are the best option for resale. Brandes moved to approve the sale with the proceeds to be deposited into Capital Projects for a new police vehicle; seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 4-0.
10. New Buffalo Schools Golf Agreement- Every year the council approves the contract presented by NBHS golf to practice here at our course, this contract is for \$600. O'Halloran moved to approve the request; seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 4-0.
11. Village Locks- Brandes moved to approve the quote from BJ's Lock shop in La Porte, IN to replace locks and reduce the number of keys needed at the Village Hall in the amount of \$1575; seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 4-0.
12. New Committees: Harry announced the following new committees he has formed;
  - a. Road Committee- chaired by Jim Bracewell with Frank Giglio, Bob Barnes, and Bob Dabbs
  - b. Tree Committee- chaired by Nancy Wendling, with Vicki McHugh, Sheila McGinnis, Peggy Stewart, and Harry Walder
  - c. Holiday Committee- chaired by Molly Newell, with Sally Barnes, Nancy Wendling and Jackie Collins
  - d. Welcome Committee- chaired by Kathy Brynes with Meg Piper, Diane Cody, Jackie Collins, and Sally Barnes
13. Lawn Mower Purchase-Rigg's- O'Halloran moved to approve the purchase of a new lawn mower for the maintenance department for \$7500 from Rigg's Outdoor Power which will be paid out of account 266.985; seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 4-0.

14. Brandes moved to approve the cost for the materials to rebuild the retaining wall next to the hall with work performed by our maintenance department. The cost from Lowes is \$2013.00; seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 4-0.
15. Direct TV Agreement-Brandes moved to renew the annual agreement with Direct TV for 3% of their services offered here to residents; seconded by O'Halloran and passed unanimously 4-0.

**Public Comment-** Meg Piper pointed out that our agenda and some of the quotes mistakenly had "township" written where it should have said "village."

Diane Cody explained a little about the Polywood outdoor furniture she is hoping to purchase in the near future for the upstairs patio. It is made of mostly recycled plastics and is a hearty product that can withstand the weather year-round and is very durable. She is hoping donations will come in that will allow the purchase of smaller tables and chairs, bigger armchair rockers, etc. She wants residents to "buy" the furniture and then a small plaque with their name will be engraved on that piece of furniture. Meg Piper asked where will this furniture get stored when someone is renting the upstairs with an event that would be outside and maybe want tents or an outdoor bar? The council stated we have to find a place to store it as it is heavy and renters cannot be expected to do that themselves.

**Correspondence** – The Village received 3 emails not in favor of changing the time of council meetings; Diane Cody, Brian Schinderle, Dave Manecke.

**Adjournment-**There being no further business before the council, O'Halloran moved to adjourn at 6:30 pm; seconded by Brandes and passed unanimously 4-0.

Kimberly Wolnik  
Clerk-Treasurer